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Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

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Human rights in the administration of justice

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the principles embodied in articles 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and the relevant provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols thereto,[2] in particular article 6 of the Covenant, which states, inter alia, that no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life and prohibits the imposition of the death penalty for crimes committed by persons below 18 years of age, and article 10, which provides that all persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person,

Bearing in mind also the relevant provisions of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,[3] the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination,[4] in particular the right to equal treatment before tribunals and all other organs administering justice, the Convention on the Rights of the Child,[5] in particular article 37,

[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex, and resolution 44/128, annex.
[3] Resolution 39/46, annex.
[4] Resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.
[5] Resolution 44/25, annex.

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according to which every child deprived of liberty shall be treated in a manner that takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[6] in particular the obligation to treat men and women equally in all stages of procedures in courts and tribunals,

Calling attention to the numerous international standards in the field of the administration of justice,

Convinced that the independence and impartiality of the judiciary are essential prerequisites for the protection of human rights, good governance and democracy as well as for ensuring that there is no discrimination in the administration of justice and should therefore be respected in all circumstances,

Noting the adoption by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination of general recommendation XXXI on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system,[7]

Emphasizing that the right to access to justice, as contained in applicable international human rights instruments, forms an important basis for strengthening the rule of law through the administration of justice,

Mindful of the importance of ensuring respect for the rule of law and human rights in the administration of justice, in particular in post-conflict situations, as a crucial contribution to building peace and justice and ending impunity,

Recalling the Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System[8] and the establishment and subsequent meetings of the Inter-Agency Coordination Panel on Juvenile Justice,

Calling attention to the relevant provisions of the Vienna Declaration on Crime and Justice: Meeting the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century,[9] and of the plans of action for its implementation and follow-up,[10]

Recalling its resolution 58/183 of 22 December 2003, as well as Commission on Human Rights resolution 2004/43 of 19 April 2004[11] and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/28 of 21 July 2004, entitled "United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice",

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of the full and effective implementation of all United Nations standards on human rights in the administration of justice;

2. *Reiterates its call* to all Member States to spare no effort in providing for effective legislative and other mechanisms and procedures, as well as adequate resources, to ensure the full implementation of those standards;

3. *Affirms* that States must ensure that any measure taken to combat terrorism, including in the administration of justice, complies with their obligations

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[6] Resolution 34/180, annex.

[7] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 18* (A/60/18), chap. IX.

[8] Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/30, annex.

[9] Resolution 55/59, annex.

[10] Resolution 56/261, annex.

[11] See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 3* (E/2004/23), chap. II, sect. A.

under international law, in particular international human rights, refugee and humanitarian law;

4. *Invites* Governments to provide for training, including anti-racist, multicultural and gender-sensitive training, in human rights in the administration of justice, including juvenile justice, to all judges, lawyers, prosecutors, social workers, immigration and police officers and other professionals concerned, including personnel deployed in international field presences;

5. *Invites* States to make use of technical assistance offered by the relevant United Nations programmes in order to strengthen national capacities and infrastructures in the field of the administration of justice;

6. *Appeals* to Governments to include in their national development plans the administration of justice as an integral part of the development process and to allocate adequate resources for the provision of legal-aid services with a view to promoting and protecting human rights, and invites the international community to respond favourably to requests for financial and technical assistance for the enhancement and strengthening of the administration of justice;

7. *Encourages* the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, United Nations institutes active in the areas of human rights and crime prevention and criminal justice, and other relevant parts of the United Nations system, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, including national professional associations concerned with promoting United Nations standards in this field, and other segments of civil society, including the media, to continue to develop their activities in promoting human rights in the administration of justice;

8. *Invites* the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to closely coordinate their activities relating to the administration of justice;

9. *Calls upon* mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights and its subsidiary bodies, including special rapporteurs, special representatives and working groups, to continue to give special attention to questions relating to the effective promotion and protection of human rights in the administration of justice, including juvenile justice, and to provide, where appropriate, specific recommendations in this regard, including proposals for advisory services and technical assistance measures;

10. *Calls upon* the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to reinforce, within their respective mandates, their activities relating to national capacity-building in the field of the administration of justice, in particular in post-conflict situations and, in this context, in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat;

11. *Encourages* the Office of the High Commissioner to continue organizing training courses and other relevant activities aimed at enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights in the field of the administration of justice, and welcomes the publication of the Manual on Human Rights Training for Prison Officials;

12. *Welcomes* the increased attention paid to the issue of juvenile justice by the High Commissioner and the United Nations Children's Fund, in particular

through technical assistance activities, and, taking into account the fact that international cooperation to promote juvenile justice reform has become a priority within the United Nations system, encourages the further activities of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Children's Fund, within their mandates, in this regard;

13. *Encourages* the Inter-Agency Coordination Panel on Juvenile Justice to further increase cooperation among the partners involved, to develop common indicators, tools and manuals, to share information and to pool their capacities and interests in order to increase the effectiveness of programme implementation, and welcomes the publication entitled "Protecting the rights of children in conflict with the law";

14. *Welcomes* the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime, set out in the annex to resolution 2005/20 of 22 July 2005, and encourages all relevant actors to draw upon the Guidelines where appropriate;

15. *Encourages* the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children to address in his final report the prevalence of violence in the juvenile justice system;

16. *Invites* Governments, relevant international and regional bodies, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations to devote increased attention to the issue of women in prison, including the children of women in prison, with a view to identifying and addressing the key problems;

17. *Underlines* the importance of rebuilding and strengthening structures for the administration of justice and respect for the rule of law and human rights in post-conflict situations, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure system-wide coordination and coherence of programmes and activities of the relevant parts of the United Nations system, including through the Peacebuilding Commission and the Rule of Law Assistance Unit as proposed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[12] in the field of the administration of justice in post-conflict situations, including assistance provided through United Nations field presences;

18. *Stresses* the special need for national capacity-building in the field of the administration of justice, in particular through reform of the judiciary, the police and the penal system, as well as juvenile justice reform, in order to establish and maintain stable societies and the rule of law in post-conflict situations, and in this context welcomes the role of the Office of the High Commissioner in supporting the establishment and functioning of transitional justice mechanisms in post-conflict situations;

19. *Decides* to consider the question of human rights in the administration of justice at its sixty-second session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

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[12] Resolution 60/1.